

THE BIBLE IN SCOTLAND AFTER THE REFORMATION

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I

IT is an historical fact which cannot be impugned that, just as it had been the wide diffusion and the reading of the Bible which had been the main cause of the Reformation, so now it was on the Scriptures that Scotland reared her new evangelical ecclesiastical system. The historian John Row states: "The ministers that were took not their pattern from any kirk in the world, no, not fra Geneva itself: but, laying God's Word before them, made reformation according thereunto both in doctrine first, and then in discipline, when and as they might get it overtaken."¹ Similarly, in 1644, when the Scottish Commissioners were in London in connection with the preparation of the Westminster Confession of Faith, they described to their English friends the method by which Knox and others had laid the foundation of the Reformed Church: "They had no other rule and patterne of reformation but the Word of God, and the practice of the Apostolicke Churches in the Word."

Thus it was on the Bible that the nation grounded its new liberties, and its form of civil and ecclesiastical government. When the Scots Confession of Faith was ratified on 17th August, 1560, by the Three Estates of Parliament, the famous declaration was added: "Protesting that gif any man will note in this our Confessioun any artickle or sentence repugning to Godis Holie Word, that it wald pleis him of his gentilnes, and for Christeane cheriteis saik, to admoneis us of the samyn in writt: and we of our honouris and fidelitie do promeis unto him satisfioun fra the mowthe of God (that is fra His Holy Scriptureis), or ellis reformatioun of that quhilk he sall prove to be amys." The Bible which thus at the Reformation came into general use in Scotland was the "Geneva" Version. This was a revision of Tyndale's translation carried out at Geneva by a group of exiles who had fled to the Swiss city to escape death at the hands of Romish persecutors. Among these was William Whittingham, whose wife was a sister of Calvin's wife. In 1557 he succeeded Knox as pastor of the English-speaking congregation. To his scholarship is mainly due the revision of the Scriptures which made the

¹ Row: *History* (Wodrow Society), p. 12.

“ Geneva ” or “ Breeches ” Bible famous and everywhere acceptable.¹ It was the first Version to have the Testament broken up into chapters, sections, and verses, and to have the verses numbered. True, the edition of the Greek Testament by Robert Stephen in 1551 had these features, but the Reformers’ Version was the first to exhibit them in an English dress.

The Version, which appeared in 1560, contained numerous notes, “ unmistakably evangelical, sublimely predestinarian, conspicuously anti-papal, and slyly democratic.”² While these were of value to many persons of imperfect education, they were at the same time objectionable to many readers. Especially did Queen Elizabeth and James VI dislike some of the notes. The latter frowned upon the marginal note to Exodus i, 19, where disobedience to tyrannical Kings is declared to be quite lawful, and he also took exception to the remarks on 2 Chronicles xv, 16, where King Asa is condemned for merely deposing, and not executing, his mother for her idolatry.³ With all the faults, however, notes such as these, the meaning of which was pondered and absorbed by multitudes of readers, must have contributed to the upbuilding of that sturdy independence of soul, and love of religious freedom, that have always characterized the Scottish nation.

It was the Geneva Version that was the first Bible to be issued by any Scottish printing press. In 1564 Robert Leprevik obtained a letter under the Privy Seal, authorizing him to print, among other things, the Psalms in Scottish metre, and in 1567 he was appointed King’s Printer, and licensed to print the Geneva Bible. But he never did so,⁴ and the honour fell to Alexander Arbuthnot, a merchant in Edinburgh, and Thomas Bassandyne, a printer. These in 1575 petitioned the General Assembly for permission to print and to sell the Geneva Bible for £4 13s 4d Scots, that is, for 7s. 9½d. These “ godly propositions,” as the Assembly styled them, were cordially approved, but with the stipulation that the printers must faithfully “ follow ” a copy of the Bible that was certified by the Church to be “ authentick.” Supervising proof readers were also appointed who were to receive “ a reasonable gratitude therefor.” To finance the scheme, the bishops, superintendents, and commissioners to the General Assembly bound themselves to ascertain how many of “ the

¹ “ Breeches ” Bible, so named from the translation of Genesis iii, 7—“ They sewed figge tree leaves together, and made themselves breeches.” It is extremely doubtful if Knox had any share in the work : the chronology of his life is against it.

² Edgar : *Bibles of England* (1888), p. 151.

³ These criticisms, attributed to James VI by Barlow, are severely discussed by Prin. Lee’s *Memorial*, p. 75, as being apocryphal.

⁴ Lee : *Additional Memorial* (1826), p. 34f.

lords, barons, and gentlemen of every parish " would " buy one of the saids volumes." It was also decreed that " every person that is provided of old as well of new, be compelled to buy a Bible to their parish Kirk, and to advance therefor the price foresaid." Armed with this agreement, the printers next applied to the Privy Council, and obtained an exclusive licence for ten years to print or sell Bibles in the vulgar " Inglis tounge, in haill or in partes with ane calendar for ten years." Delay however ensued. Bassandyne died; and in 1579 Arbuthnot issued the Bible with his own imprint and name, though on the title page for the New Testament the printer's name appears as " Thomas Bassandyne," and the year as " 1576." In 1580 the Privy Council enacted that every householder must possess himself of a copy with his name attached to it to prevent fraud, under a penalty of £10 (Scots). That this was no idle threat is evident from various entries in the Records of the Edinburgh Council.¹

For the next thirty years practically no other Bible was read in Scotland but the Geneva Version. In 1610, however, Andro Hart published in Edinburgh a revision of the Geneva, with amendments made by Laurence Tomson, who was considered to be one of the best linguists of his day. Though his amendations are not now generally approved by modern scholarship, many of his transliterations have been perpetuated in the Authorized Version.² In 1611 the Synod of Fife ordained that " evrie brother sall urge his parochinares to buy ane of the Bybles laitlie printed be Andro Hart," under a penalty of ten shillings sterling for default. A Presbyterial Visitation held at Kintore in 1674 revealed that the " old translation " was still used in public worship. Principal Lee wrote in 1824 that " till within the last forty years, a Bible of Geneva translation was used in the Church of Crail." The Version enjoyed a well deserved popularity in Scotland, and in many cases it was only with extreme reluctance that it was set aside from common use by King James' Version.

II

In 1604 King James, at the famous Hampton Court Conference, received with favour the suggestion by Dr Reynolds, President of the Corpus Christi College, Oxford, that there should be a new translation of the Bible. The work was at once undertaken, and in 1611 the Authorized Version was published.³ The history of how the great enterprise was

¹ Lee *Memorial* (1824) p. 41.

² For illustrations see Edgar : *Bibles of England*, p. 163f; Lee : *Memorial*, p. 59.

³ There is an excellent analysis of King James' share in this work in Muir's *Our Grand Old Bible* (1911) p. 77f.

carried through, the personalities of the scholars who laboured at the gigantic task, and the rules and methods of work followed by the Revisers, have been amply detailed by many writers.¹ The superior excellence of the new translation at once rendered obsolete the earlier efforts of Tyndale (1525), Matthew (1537), Taverner (1539), Cranmer and Cromwell (1539), the Geneva Revisers (1560), and the Bishops (1568). To the literary, educational, and religious value of this Authorized Version, no higher testimony could be borne than that by the late Professor Huxley, himself an agnostic : " Consider the great historical fact that for three centuries this Book has been woven into the life of that which is best and noblest in English history : that it has become the national epic of Britain, and is as familiar to noble and simple, from John o' Groat's to Land's End, as Dante and Tasso once were to the Italians : that it is written in the noblest and purest English, and abounds in exquisite beauties of mere literary form : and finally, that it forbids the veriest hind who never left his village to be ignorant of the existence of other countries, and other civilizations, and of a great past stretching back to the furthest limits of the oldest nations in the world. By the study of what other book could children be so much humanized and made to feel that each figure in that vast historical procession fills, like themselves, but a momentary space in the interval between two eternities : and earns the blessings or the curses of all time, according to its effort to do good and hate evil, even as they also are earning their payment for their work ? "

Though the Geneva Version was such a favourite in both England and Scotland that more than fifty editions of it were printed, it was gradually superseded in common use by the Authorized Version of 1611. In spite of the fact that at first the new version was not well received in Scotland, it steadily won its way, and in process of time it came to be recognised as the standard version. Nevertheless, when the famous Alexander Henderson preached to the General Assembly in Edinburgh in 1639, he used the Geneva Version, and such was the affection for the old translation that one of the charges in the impeachment of Archbishop Laud was that " one of the first books most strictly prohibited to be printed, imported, or sold by this Archbishop was the English Geneva Bible, with marginal notes and prefaces, though printed here in England without the least restraint."

¹ Among a multitude of books the following are of special note :—Anderson's *Annals of Eng. Bible* (1845) ; Westcott's *General View of Hist. of Eng. Bible* (1872 and 1905) ; Eadie's *English Bible* (1876) ; Moulton's *Hist. of Eng. Bible* (1884) ; Scrivener's *The Authorized Edition of Eng. Bible* (1884) ; Edgar's *Bibles of England* (1889) ; Pattison's *Hist. of Eng. Bible* (1894) ; Milligan's *English Bible* (1895) ; Hoare's *Evolution of Eng. Bible* (1901) ; Lupton in *Hastings' Dict. of the Bible*, V, 253f (1904) ; Price : *Ancestry of Eng. Bible* (1906).

Very marked and deep was the influence of the Bible on the spiritual life of Scotland in the 17th century. It was the Bible that had most to do with the religious uprising that led to the signing of the National Covenant, and the Second Reformation of 1638. One of the most outstanding testimonies is that of Kirkton, minister at Lanark and later at Mertoun. In his *History*, speaking of the years 1649 to 1661, he states: "In the interval betwixt the two Kings, religion advanced the greatest step it hade made for many years: now the ministry was notably purified, the magistracy altered, and the people strangely refined." He speaks of the "great successe the Word preached hade in sanctifying the people of the nation. At the King's (Charles II) return, every parochie hade a minister, every village hade a school, every family almost had a Bible, yea, in most of the country all the children of age could read the Scriptures, and were furnished of Bibles, either by the parents or by the ministers. . . . Every minister was obliged to preach thrice a week, to lecture and catechise once, beside other private duties. . . . Indeed, in many places the Spirit seemed to be poured out with the Word. . . . There were no fewer than sixty aged people, men and women, who went to school, that even then they might be able to read the Scriptures with their own eyes. I have lived many years in a parish where I have never heard ane oath, and you might have ridden many miles before you hade heard any." ¹

This spiritually blessed time is referred to in similar terms by another contemporary, Alexander Reid. He tells us that he was born in Kirkliston, in 1646, "that flourishing time of the Gospel," and that he was "splendidly trained in the Scriptures."² In Newmills in one winter forty persons, all over forty years of age, learned to read, that they might profit by reading the Scriptures.³ In Dalgety, from 1644 till 1662, through the devoted labours of the minister, Andrew Donaldson, a wonderful level of parochial religious life was attained. Even little herd-boys were bred in the knowledge of the grounds of religion, and were kept at school till they were able to read the Bible. "Poor bodies" got Bibles free: no fewer than eleven Bibles, each costing £2 (Scots) were given away in one month in 1654.⁴

¹ Kirkton's *Secret and True History*, pp. 48-64. This testimony, which has been impugned by Kirkpatrick Sharp, Lee, Cunningham, etc., is upheld by Brown's *Church and State in Scot.* (1891), p. 120, who brings out corroborative evidence from a MS. note in library of Earl of Marchmont. See also Wodrow's *Hist. of Sufferings* i, (1721), p. 332.

² *The Life of Alexander Reid, a Scottish Covenanter, written by himself* (1822).

³ Scott: *Fasti*, iii, 183, under the ministry of Rev. James Greig (1597-1635).

⁴ Hewison: *Covenanters*, ii (1908), 109.

III

This halcyon time of Bible instruction, and of growth in Christian living, was now to be followed by the period of greatest anguish ever endured by the Scottish nation. The twenty-eight years of the "Killing Times" were the most atrocious, cruel, and iniquitous in the annals of the country. They were the result of the attempt to foist on Scotland a system of Church government to which it was resolutely opposed, and in order to enforce subjection to the tyranny of the Stuart Kings and their prelatie ecclesiastical coadjutors, the godliest people in Scotland were treated with a barbarous heartlessness that had its equal only in the religious wars of the Roman Catholic Counter-Reformation. One is appalled at the figures enumerating the sufferers in the Covenanting Period, in their suggestion of brutality and misery—362 judicially executed; 498 murdered in the fields; 680 killed fighting; 750 banished to various far-off spots; 1700 transported overseas as felons; 2800 flung into prisons and dungeons; 7000 forced to flee to any place of refuge, besides hundreds of others who perished through wounds, want, starvation, sickness, and cold.¹ But while the names of the perpetrators of these brutalities—Archbishop Sharp, Lauderdale, Claverhouse, Grierson of Lag, Dalziel, and others—are branded with eternal infamy, the names of the martyrs whom they butchered are enshrined in the veneration of all lovers of the Gospel. In these terrible times, it was the Bible which, more than anything else, maintained the faith of the sufferers, and nerved them for the terrors of the day of execution.²

Thus in 1666 Hugh McKail on the scaffold found comfort in reading the last chapter of his pocket Testament. In 1679 Andrew Sword, a weaver from Borgue, died with the words of the 34th Psalm on his lips. In 1681 Isobel Alison from Perth, and Marion Harvey from Bo'ness, only twenty years of age, sang the 23rd, the 74th and the 84th Psalms, and read Mark xvi and Malachi iii before they were hanged. Then laying aside the Word, they exclaimed, "Farewell, sweet Bible, farewell, sweet Scriptures," and thereafter, as Peden says, "the two honest, worthy lassies exchanged the cross for the crown."³ In the same year Donald Cargill, hearing the clerk, while reading out his death sentence, using the words, "having cast off the fear of God," cried out "Halt!" Then, pointing to Lord Advocate Mackenzie, he said, "The man that has caused that paper to be drawn in that form, hath done it contrary to the light of

¹ *Ibid.*, ii, 512.

² Many illustrations are given by Prothero: *Psalms in Human Life* (1905), chap. x.

³ Hewison: *Op. cit.*, ii, 346.

his own conscience ; for he knows that I have been a fearer of God from my infancy ; but I say, the man that took the Holy Bible in his hand and said that ‘ it would never be well with the land until that Book was destroyed,’ he is the man that has cast off all fear of God.” And the next day, on the scaffold, Cargill and four others were executed, singing from the 118th Psalm, “ I shall not die, but live.”

Alexander Home, with the rope round his neck, sang the last verse of the 17th Psalm :

“ But as for me, I Thine own face
In righteousness will see :
And with Thy likeness, when I wake,
I satisfy’d shall be.”

It was the rich spiritual feeding on the Bible which in 1683 led to the drawing up of the touching “ Children’s Covenant ” of the Pentlands, whereby fifteen “ young children ” pledged loyalty to Christ, using the language of Scripture, signing it with their names, and adding “ out of the mouths of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained wisdom.” In 1684 John Dick of Edinburgh died in the Grassmarket, after singing the 2nd Psalm and reading aloud the 9th chapter of Ezekiel. In 1685 Daniel MacMichael was dragged from his sickbed, and on the moor at Nether Dalveen was ordered to prepare for death. He read, “ A little while and ye shall not see me . . . in the world ye shall have tribulation : be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.” Then four carbines rang out, and the martyr’s blood stained the grass. At Ingliston Farm, Moniaive, five godly men were shot, singing ere they died the 17th Psalm and reading John xvi, “ Yea, the time cometh that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service.”

The two noble women, Margaret Lauchlan and Margaret Wilson, tied to stakes at Wigtown in the rapid incoming Solway tides, read Romans viii, with their Bibles in their hand sang the 25th Psalm, and were drowned in the rising waters. Andrew Hislop, a widow’s son at Hutton, when Claverhouse ordered his troopers to shoot him, stood Bible in hand, refusing to be blindfolded, facing his three executioners whom he summoned to answer for their crime at the Great Day. Then singing a portion of the 118th Psalm, he won the martyr’s crown.¹ James Kirko of Dunscore was shot on the White Sands of Dumfries, after singing the 116th Psalm, “ Dear in God’s sight in His saints’ death,” and reading the Scripture. In 1688 James Renwick walked to the scaffold in a transport of joy, sang the 103rd Psalm, and read Revelation xx till the gallows ended his testimony for Christ.

In these and countless other cases the Bible proved to be the

¹ Hewison : *Op. cit.*, ii, 479.

inexpressibly comforting support of those who were murdered in the interests of autocracy. The Divine Word with its assurances of God's pardon and peace, and its promises of Heaven's bliss, was everywhere rested upon, and it is impossible to exaggerate the value of the Holy Scriptures to the strengthening of men's faith and resolute purpose, even unto death, in an era when brute force was being exercised to crush out Scotland's love for her own Church and her own form of ecclesiastical government.

II

In a period like the Covenanting era when "the wicked walked on every side and the vilest men were exalted," it is scarcely to be wondered at that the printing of the Bible in Scotland became a public scandal for badness. The successive Royal Printers could scarcely have been more infamous. Thomas Findlasone was King's Printer for Scotland from 1612 to 1632, and never printed a single book of the Bible though authorized to do so in all languages. Robert Young followed him in 1632, and had Evan Tyler as his partner from 1641. In 1633 Young published at Edinburgh King James' Version of the New Testament, and in 1638 a small edition of the Bible. His reputation, however, is summed up in the words of the Earl of Stirling in a letter to the Bishop of Ross: Young, the printer, is the greatest knave that ever I dealt with, and therefore trust nothing to him, nor his servants, but what of necessity you must."

In 1663 Andrew Anderson was appointed "Printer to the City and College of Edinburgh." So scandalous were the gross errors that everywhere characterized a New Testament in Black Letter which he printed for the use of school children, that in 1671 the Privy Council reprimanded him, forbade the sale of the book, ordered, under a penalty of £100 fine, the correction of its most glaring faults, and insisted on the insertion of a title page which he had neglected to furnish. Yet this same Privy Council, within three months of the conviction of this man, "the most negligent and bungling printer, one of the very worst who has ever been known to Scotland,"¹ influenced by bribery, granted Anderson a gift under the Great Seal which constituted him His Majesty Charles II's "sole, absolute, and only printer." whereby no one else dare issue any book whatsoever without his permission!

At his death in 1676 his widow secured a perpetuation of the monopoly, styling herself "Printeress to His Most Sacred Majesty," and continuing

¹ Lee: *Memorial*, p. 118.

to issue Scriptures that were a thorough disgrace.¹ While she sedulously prosecuted any other printer who dared to infringe her patent, she herself produced Bibles so execrably printed that they represent typography at its very worst. The books were inaccurate and illegible. Greedy, and careless of Scotland's reputation, she left the actual work to be carried out by ignorant apprentices, and fought like a fury to assert her legal right to prevent all other printers and booksellers from intruding on her copyright. In 1680 the booksellers of Edinburgh who had been importing Bibles from Holland, on being prosecuted by this virago, appealed to the Privy Council, and they also printed a list of the notorious *errata* in Mrs. Anderson's versions of Scriptures.² Eventually the booksellers triumphed. Mrs. Anderson was ordered to return the Bibles introduced from Holland, which she had seized. In addition, the right of printing Bibles was, for a time at least, granted to any one who desired to avail himself of it. Nevertheless, the "Printeress to His Most Sacred Majesty" continued till 1712 to issue miserably printed Bibles which were a disgrace from every point of view.

It is impossible to calculate the injury done to Scotland through this monopoly granted by the persecutors of the Covenanters to a woman who scandalously abused her position. Practically the whole population was compelled to use Bibles printed from nonpareil and pearl—two almost microscopic founts of type. Only young eyes could read them: and what they read was often unintelligible. Whole lines were omitted; grammatical errors stood on every page; words were slumped together without any division between them; the spelling was bad, and wrong words were printed which turned the context into nonsense. No wonder that vital religion decayed when it was made almost impossible to read the Book. If the 18th century was afflicted with ignorance, apathy, spiritual deadness, moderatism, and religious coldness, much of this was due to the fact that the Holy Scriptures had been so execrably printed that they were well-nigh illegible, that their style was singularly unattractive and repellent to the eye, and that in one edition of the New Testament there were more than 2000 printers' errors. And though in 1706 the scandal of this was brought before the General Assembly, and that body instructed its Commission to petition the Government to stop the circulation of incorrect versions of the Bible, nevertheless in 1712 this unscrupulous woman actually contrived by bribery to secure her appointment as "Printer to the Church of Scotland." In virtue of this office she issued the Acts of Assembly in an equally incorrect manner.

¹ A defence of Mrs. Anderson was made in J. A. Fairley's *Agnes Campbell*, Aberdeen, 1926, but all adverse reference to her in the Privy Council Registers has been omitted.

² A number of these *errata* are cited by Lee: *Memorial*, pp. 152, 164-167.

II

Mrs. Anderson's monopoly of Bible printing having expired in 1712, a new patent was obtained by Robert Freebairn, but as he became involved in the Rebellion of 1715 he was deprived of his licence. At the accession of George I in 1716 the monopoly was granted once more to the notorious Mrs. Anderson who, however, died in the same year. Her partner, John Baskett,¹ nevertheless, carried on the printing business for forty-one years, during which the issuing of Bibles continued to be marked with almost the same amount of carelessness, inaccuracy, and slovenliness. Very different, however, were those Bibles that were printed by James Watson, a rival printer, who, having acquired a share of Freebairn's patent, could defy Baskett. He issued Scriptures, the type of which was much esteemed, and he set accuracy before him as the main object to be aimed at. His folio Bible of 1722 was much valued.

Thus during the 18th century the Scriptures, produced by the official printers, were in every way most inferior to other books of a secular character done in the beautiful typography shown by contemporary printers, such as Thomas Ruddiman, Hamilton, Balfour and Neill, in Edinburgh, or by Urie and the Foulises in Glasgow.¹ The monopoly enjoyed by the "King's Printer" was most detrimental to the issuing of attractive Books, and though the professed object of granting the monopoly was to maintain the purity and correctness of the text, the very opposite was the result. Even in 1793 the Synod of Glasgow and Ayr overtured the General Assembly as follows: "Whereas it is notorious that the late common edition of the Bible is printed so imperfectly, and on such bad paper, as to be almost illegible, it is overtured that proper means be used that the Bible shall be printed in such a distinct manner, and on such paper, that it may be read with ease by the common people." Yet nothing was done, and the execrable form of issuing the Book continued. "No school book,"³ says Lee, "would have been tolerated if printed in so wretched a style. Indeed it cannot be denied that the indistinct manner in which the Bible was printed for many years contributed in no small degree to induce teachers to discontinue its use." All that the Assembly did was to pass an Act in 1794 to the effect that "to provide a remedy for the growth of licentiousness among youth, all parochial schoolmasters and other teachers of schools within the Church, shall cause the Holy Bible to be read as a regular exercise in their several schools by the children under their care."

¹ Baskett printed the famous "Vinegar Bible" at Oxford in 1717; he inserted "The Parable of the *Vinegar*" in place of the "Parable of the Vineyard" (Luke xxii).

² Lee: *Memorial*, p. 185.

³ *Ibid.*, 195.

III

Notwithstanding these grievous defects in the printing of the Scriptures, the Bible during the 18th century exercised a paramount influence on Scottish life and character. It was through its teachings that the famous Revivals at Cambuslang, Kilsyth, and other localities took place. It was the Bible which inspired Thomas Boston of Ettrick, Ralph and Ebenezer Erskine, Thomas Gillespie, George Whitefield, John Brown of Haddington, author of *The Self-Interpreting Bible*, Dr John Erskine of "Rax-me-that-Bible" fame, Robert and James Haldane, and many another Christian leader, and saint. It was the Bible which profoundly moved the souls of poets and literary men such as James Thomson, author of *The Seasons*, Michael Bruce of Lochleven, Robert Burns, Joanna Baillie, Thomas Campbell, and Sir Walter Scott.¹ The Bible moulded the thoughts of men to an incalculable degree, and the fruits of the study of the Word were seen in the earnest missionary efforts of the succeeding century.

IV

One step taken in connection with the Highlands was of far-reaching importance, namely, the translation of the Scriptures into Gaelic. The condition of the Highlands at the beginning of the 18th century was "truly deplorable."² Geographically remote and cut off from the civilization of the south by roadless tracts, wild mountains, and unbridged rivers; with the ancient clan system along with the hereditary jurisdiction of the chieftains in full operation; with few schools, and with the great majority of the people speaking a language that was unknown in other parts of Scotland, the Highlands were in danger of lapsing altogether into paganism, or, through the exertions of Irish priests, of reverting wholly to Romanism. Even as far back as 1616 an Act of the Privy Council had styled the "Irishe" (Gaelic) language as "one of the chieff and principall causes of the continuance of barbaritie and incivilitie among the inhabitants of the Isles and Heylandis," and had sought to erect schools that the language might be "abolished and removit." Since then, the use of Gaelic had been severely discouraged as the tongue of a "barbaric" race.

¹ For the Biblical allusions in the writings of these, see Mcfatti *Bible in Scots Literature*, chaps. iv and v.

² *An Account of the Scottish S.P.C.K. from its commencement in 1709, in which is included the present state of the Highlands and Islands of Scotland with regard to Religion*; Edinburgh, 1774, p. 1.

There were those, however, who had all along perceived the peculiar effectiveness of Gaelic for purposes of devotion, and a succession of scholars applied their minds to the task of translation. The first Gaelic Version of the Psalms was published in 1659, though only fifty Psalms were included. In 1694 the whole of the Psalter was printed.¹ In 1745 the Gaelic Paraphrases, forty-five in number, were laid before the General Assembly, and in 1781 the number was increased to sixty-seven.

The Rev. Dugald Campbell of Knapdale, when he died in 1673, left behind him a complete version of the Old Testament in Scottish Gaelic,² but though brought before the Synod of Argyll in 1701 it was never published from lack of funds. In 1686 Bishop Bedell's Bible in Irish Gaelic was published in two volumes. Two hundred copies were sent to the Highlands on condition that the ministers "read some chapters every Lord's Day to the people," and that the Book should "be taken care of as for the use of the parish." But it was the Rev. James Kirkwood who, though an Episcopalian Lowlander, "initiated the great and noble enterprise of disseminating the Word of God among the Highlanders in the Irish tongue."³ Recognizing that it was the Bible alone that could uplift his countrymen spiritually and socially, he induced the Rev. Robert Kirk of Aberfoyle to transcribe into Roman letters the unfamiliar Irish characters in which Bedell's Old Testament and O'Donnell's New Testament were issued. Kirk's Bible appeared in 1690 in an edition of 2000 copies.

In 1701 several Edinburgh gentlemen, deeply concerned over the state of the Highlands, began to raise funds for the establishment of schools. In 1704 the General Assembly warmly commended the scheme, and in 1708 Queen Anne granted letters-patent under the Great Seal of Scotland, for erecting the subscribers into a Corporation, and thus there came into being on 3rd November, 1709, "The Society in Scotland for Propagating Christian Knowledge," which has had a profoundly beneficial effect on the whole Highland area.⁴ Year by year, as its financial resources grew, it planted schools in ever increasing localities, where regular Bible instruction was imparted. Beginning in 1711 with one school on St. Kilda, by 1731 the number throughout Scotland had increased to 106; by 1741

¹ MacKinnon: *Gaelic Bible and Psalter* (1930), p. 6, an admirable and reliable book.

² *Ibid.*, p. 44.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 50.

⁴ The Scottish S.P.C.K. was the first to send out missionaries to the Red Indians of Massachusetts (1730); to the Scottish settlers in Georgia (1735); to the Delaware and Susquehanna Indians (1741). It also appointed and supported David Brainerd in his apostolic labours among Albany and New Jersey Indians (1743-1747), and many another fruitful Foreign Mission enterprise among the Indians of North America (*Account*, pp. 13-19): see Pratt: *Life of Brainerd* (1834), p. 58f.

to 128 ; by 1761 to 146 ; and by 1771 to 159. Its capital throughout the same period had similarly risen from £3700 to £33,799.¹

One of the greatest services rendered by this Scottish S.P.C.K. was the furnishing of funds for the printing of the New Testament in Scottish Gaelic. Hitherto the Highlanders had had to be content with the Scriptures in Irish Gaelic. There were many indeed who were disposed to emphasise the expediency of the Act of James VI, already quoted, which sought to eradicate the ancient tongue altogether from the soil of Scotland. It was largely due to the eloquent pleading of the famous Dr Samuel Johnson in a letter of remonstrance which he sent to the directors of the S.P.C.K., some of whom had objections to the publishing of a Gaelic Version, that the Society at last undertook the task. The translator was the Rev. Dr James Stuart of Killin, a man of great learning, who, while caring for the spiritual interests of a very wide Highland parish, contrived to find time to perform this splendid service for his fellow-countrymen. In his labours of translating the New Testament into Gaelic he was assisted by the Rev. James Fraser of Alness, the author of *A Treatise on Sanctification*, and by Dugald Buchanan, the poet-preacher of Rannoch. The work was published in 1767, a truly notable year in the annals of the Highlands.

So warm was the welcome given to this Gaelic New Testament that the S.P.C.K. next undertook the publishing of the Old Testament. It was arranged that the Book should be divided into four sections, and that these, as they were ready, should be issued in separate volumes. Part I, containing the Pentateuch, translated by the Rev. Dr John Stuart of Luss, son of the translator of the New Testament, was published in 1783. Part IV next appeared in 1786, being the Prophetical Books, translated by Rev. Dr John Smith of Campbeltown. Part II, from Joshua to 1 Chronicles, was issued in 1787, the work of Dr Stuart ; and Part III, from 2 Chronicles to Canticles, again the translation of Dr Stuart, appeared in 1801. In the translation of Parts I and II Dr Stuart was assisted by the Rev. Donald MacQueen of Kilmuir, Skye, whose scholarship so mightily impressed Dr Samuel Johnson. Dr Smith's rendering of Part IV was so severely criticized for its free translations, which were more of the nature of a paraphrase than a literal transcription, that it had later to be withdrawn.

Dr Stuart in 1819 received £1000 from the Lords of the Treasury, as an acknowledgment of his labours.² The total cost of producing the complete Bible in Gaelic was £3882,³ a large sum, but its spending was well justified by the blessing that has accompanied the issue of the whole Gaelic Scriptures.

¹ *Account of Society*, etc., p. 13.

² MacNeill's *Literature of Highlanders* (1929), p. 495.

³ MacKinnon : *Ibid.*, p. 61.